



**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the**  
**Interior**

Palo Alto Battlefield  
National Historical Park

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## **Palo Alto Battlefield NHP News Release**

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### **Changing of the Guard at Resaca de la Palma Battlefield**

In early August, the Brownsville Community Foundation transferred the title of this 34.4 acre historic site to the National Park Service (NPS). The area becomes the second unit of the Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park—a site dedicated to the preservation of the first battlefields of the 1846 U.S.-Mexican War.

The transfer crowns a successful partnership between the Brownsville Community Foundation and the National Park Service to preserve the remaining portion of this important national site. For more than a decade, the Brownsville Community Foundation has worked closely with the National Park Service to build the visitors center at the Palo Alto Battlefield and to acquire and maintain the Resaca de la Palma Battlefield, to establish visitor facilities and to host special events and programs at that site.

The Brownsville Community Foundation also helped make the purchase by the National Park Service possible. In 2009, BCF Chairman Diane Garza and others spearheaded efforts to have the Resaca de la Palma site included in the administrative boundary of Palo Alto Battlefield. This became a reality with the passage of the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009 which designated the Resaca de la Palma battlefield as a second unit of Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park. The bill also permitted the NPS to begin efforts to purchase the Resaca de la Palma site and assure its preservation.

“The people of Brownsville and the United States owe a debt of gratitude to the individuals and civic leaders who took steps years ago to protect this site”, said Palo Alto Battlefield NHP Superintendent Mark Spier. “The National Park Service is truly indebted to the Brownsville Community Foundation for their years of stewardship and partnership in maintaining the site and we are extremely excited to build upon their great work”.

The National Park Service will begin to increase public access to the site and to provide additional tours and historic programs. In time, the park hopes to add restroom facilities, a visitor contact area and daily public access to the site. The field will also continue to host special events like the park’s Memorial Illumination, held each November.

The Resaca de la Palma Battlefield, located at 1050 Paredes Line Road just north of Price Road, was the scene of the second major battle of the U.S.-Mexican war. The clash of May 9, 1846 continued the fighting that began the previous day at Palo Alto. The decisive fight left U.S. troops in control of disputed land north of the Rio Grande. Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site was established in 1993 to preserve the site of the first battle of this war and to help protect associated sites in the region. Re-designated Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park in 2009, the park is one of 395 units of the National Park Service preserving our nation's natural and cultural treasures in every state (except Delaware), the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

The current Board of Directors for the Brownsville Community Foundation are: Diane Garza, Chairman; Gilbert Elizondo, Vice Chairman; Richard Burton; Irv Downing; Polo Borrego; Mary Lou Ray; George Farrish; Fred Rusteberg; Raymond Cisneros; Mary Ytturia; Asim Zamir; and Pat Lavine, Executive Director.

In expressing thoughts about preserving the Resaca de la Palma battlefield, Chairman Diane Garza remarked, "Although we are talking about the historic site of a battle of a war, we are also talking about 'hallowed ground' in a region that is so entrenched in the cultures of two nations-- Mexico and the United States, that it is almost an area of one country. The sons of both countries fought and died there. Today's residents are descendants of both the American soldiers and the Mexican soldiers who gave their lives at the battle of Resaca de la Palma."

"While the two nations, the United States and Mexico, have battled over boundaries and borders from time to time throughout their histories, they have also and more importantly shared human bonds that transcend political issues. The border area of Texas and Mexico is one of shared values, shared beliefs, shared cultures, even shared languages...it is like no other area in the United States or in Mexico. So our celebration is in preserving a perpetual memory of the bravery of the sons of both the United States and Mexico as they all fought for their own beliefs."

"The Brownsville Community Foundation would like to sincerely thank former Congressman Solomon Ortiz and Senator John Cornyn for their help with the legislation needed to make the preservation of Resaca de la Palma possible."